

**MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO**  
GUAM

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MINERAL RESOURCES



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE:**  
2441 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-1188  
FAX: (202) 226-0341

**DISTRICT OFFICE:**  
120 FATHER DUENAS AVENUE  
SUITE 107  
HAGATÑA, GUAM 96910  
(671) 477-4272  
FAX: (671) 477-2587

<http://www.house.gov/bordallo>

February 1, 2018

The Honorable Eddie Baza Calvo  
Governor of Guam  
Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex  
Adelup, Guam 96910

Dear Governor Calvo,

I write in response to your letter of February 1, 2018 regarding S. 2165, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands Equitable Rebuild Act of 2017, introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Bernie Sanders, to provide additional federal disaster recovery assistance to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. I am a cosponsor of companion legislation in the House, H.R. 4782, which while similar to S. 2165, goes further than the Senate bill in providing federal assistance to Guam.

Specifically, I joined my colleague, Rep. Stacey Plasket of the U.S. Virgin Islands, to ensure that Guam is included in cover over provisions for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit. As you are aware, my colleagues and I have long advocated in Congress to give Guam and the other territories tax parity and require Treasury to cover over to our local governments amounts paid for EITC and CTC. In addition to H.R. 4782, I also joined Rep. Plaskett on January 3, 2017 in introducing standalone legislation, H.R. 185, for EITC and CTC cover overs for Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the other territories.


I share your views that that the Medicaid program places a disproportionate burden on Guam's and other territorial governments, and I continue to work with my colleagues to fix these challenges. I hope you are pleased to know that H.R. 4782 of which I am a cosponsor also contains Medicaid priorities important to Guam, including the removal of annual Medicaid caps, parity with the states in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP), and extension of additional Medicaid funding provided to the territories through the Affordable Care Act until they are expended. Our bill also makes Guam eligible for Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) allotments and to rebase hospital reimbursements, which is especially important to the Guam Memorial Hospital.

Our House bill also contains the full legislative provision of my LWCF Parity for the Territories and DC Act to give Guam a full share on par with each of the 50 states of LWCF funding for public parks, playgrounds, and other community spaces. Currently Guam splits with the other territories and DC a single share of what is provided to each of the 50 states. I hope that you will publically support this effort and work through the National Association of Governors to endorse it.

Additionally, while I continue to support citizens of the Freely Associated States who contribute positively to Guam, I share your concerns of impacts of the Compacts of Free Association have on GovGuam's finances. I have consistently advocated for additional funding for the affected jurisdictions and proposed legislation to decrease GovGuam's outlays to support this agreement. In fact, earlier this year I reintroduced an expanded Compact Impact Relief Act to provide a holistic approach to addressing the challenges of the Compacts. If enacted, my bill would give immediate relief GovGuam, make Compact citizens eligible for federal assistance programs, and make it easier for them to contribute to our local community. I hope that you will support my efforts to move this bill through the legislative process.

I share your desire for greater federal assistance to Guam, and I continue working in Congress so that our island is treated equitably. I hope that we will continue to work together and present a unified, One Guam voice to the federal government on matters important to the people of Guam. I understand that you will be in Washington, D.C. during the week of February 19, 2018, and I hope we will have an opportunity to discuss these and other issues while you are in our nation's capital. I will reach out to Senator Sanders and encourage him to support the House companion bill to his S. 2165, of which I am a cosponsor, which includes important provisions to Guam and the other territories.

Sincerely,

  
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO  
Member of Congress

Enclosure: H.R. 4782